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CDC Health Update

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Measles Outbreak in the Marshall Islands

Travelers to the Marshall Islands should be fully vaccinated against measles.

A measles outbreak has occurred in the Marshall Islands, with spread cases reported in Hawaii, Palau and Guam. In the Marshall Islands, the outbreak has involved 703 cases, 56 hospitalizations and three deaths. The age distribution data shows the highest incidence among children 1-4 years however, although 62% of the cases are occurring among children less than 15 years of age, cases are also occurring among adults up to age 40 years.

Spread cases (2 confirmed, others probable) have been seen in Guam (3), Palau (1) and Hawaii (4). Three other cases are under investigation in Hawaii among Marshallese. In addition, special vaccination activities have been conducted in Arkansas due to a large population of Marshallese residing there.

Approximately 800 doses of vaccine per day are being administered in the Marshall Islands to infants greater than 6 months of age and to persons through 40 years old without evidence of measles vaccination.

CDC is assisting with outbreak control, coordination of vaccine and immune globulin shipments to the Marshall Islands and technical assessments.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

This Message was distributed to State and Local Health Officials, Information Officers, and HAN Coordinators.

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